

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Please amend the claims by canceling original claims 1-14 and substituting new claims 27-31 therefore, without prejudice, as indicated on the following listing of all the claims in the present application after this Amendment:

1 – 26. (cancelled)

27. (new) In a semiconductor memory having an array of non-volatile memory cells divided into a plurality of blocks that individually include a minimum number of memory cells that are erasable together, the blocks of memory cells being further divided into a plurality of pages that individually have a capacity to store at least one unit of user data plus a plurality of bytes of overhead data, a method of operating the memory, comprising:

programming a plurality of units of user data into the pages of at least one of the blocks of memory cells in successive adjacent physical locations therein including the capacity provided in the pages for storing the plurality of bytes of overhead data and across boundaries of the pages,

continuing to program the units of user data into the pages of said one block until a number of units of user data have been programmed into said one block that exceed a number units that the plurality of pages that said one block would store if user data were not being stored in the capacity of the pages provided in said one block for storing the plurality of bytes of overhead data, thereby to store an increased number of units of user data in the block, and

storing, in another one of the plurality of blocks different from said one block, a plurality of bytes of overhead data associated with the units of user data stored in said one block.

28. (new) The method of claim 27, wherein no bytes of overhead data are stored in said one block in which the plurality of units of user data are programmed.

29. (new) The method of claim 27, wherein all the plurality of bytes of overhead data associated with units of user data programmed into said one block are stored together in a common another one of the blocks.

30. (new) The method of claim 27, wherein the bytes of overhead data stored in said another one of the blocks of memory cells include data of attributes of the user data stored in said one block and data of attributes of said one block.

31. (new) The method of any one of claims 27-30, additionally comprising operating the memory cells with a plurality of effective threshold levels in excess of two that correspond to a plurality of alterable states of the individual cells in excess of two, whereby charge storage elements of the cells individually store more than one bit of data.